

Innovation and Design Process

The Innovation and Design Process section rewards projects that exemplify sustainable strategies and building practices that are not fully embodied in existing LEED credit requirements. Exemplary performance can be demonstrated in two different ways: by reaching a new credit threshold (in most cases, by doubling the existing threshold) or through the implementation of sustainable design approaches outside those defined by the LEED-NC scope.



Colorado Springs Utilities Laboratory
applied Labs21 environmental performance criteria
to achieve an Innovation in Design credit
Courtesy: Ed Lacasse Photography

ID Credits 1.1 to 1.4: Innovation in Design

LEED provides four “wild card” credits where it is up to the project team to identify the intent of the proposed credit, define the requirements for compliance and documentation, and demonstrate that the project’s design approach meets the credit requirements as defined.

Recommendations:

- Many credit interpretations (CIRs) exist regarding Innovation in Design (ID) credits. It is best to thoroughly research these CIRs and learn from past successes in order to glean valuable ideas and identify effective strategies for earning ID credits.
- Although it is best not to waste the USGBC reviewer’s time with frivolous credit attempts, it is highly recommended to pursue these credits. Achievement of these credits can distinguish a project from other LEED projects and showcase its sustainable features.

Helpful Hints:

- A project can apply for a maximum of four ID credits at one time. However, a project can substitute replacement ID credits, if a proposed ID credit is denied during the preliminary review process. This, in effect, provides a project with eight chances to achieve four additional credits.
- Since the intent of ID credits is to promote innovation, the USGBC has become stricter in their acceptance of proposed innovations over time. For example, many projects earned ID credit for educational outreach programs. To earn credit, early LEED projects needed only to effectively inform the public of the building’s participation in the LEED program. Recently, however, the USGBC has begun to require projects provide specific and extensive educational policies and procedures to be eligible to earn credit.
- Adopt a credit from another LEED product such as LEED-CI or LEED-EB that is not a credit under LEED-NC.

QUICK FACTS

Implementation: Strongly recommended.

Historical Data: Colorado projects have, on average, earned *three of the four* available Innovation in Design credits.



Colorado Department of Labor & Employment earned an innovation credit for green housekeeping, which includes an environmentally-preferred product purchasing policy and cleaning procedures.

Courtesy: Colorado Department of Labor & Employment

- The USGBC has defined acceptable exceedence thresholds for many existing credits (See the USGBC website). If a project exceeds the established threshold, it is assured award of LEED ID credit. A maximum of four ID credits can be awarded to a project, regardless of the number of exceedences achieved.
- Generally, if a credit has several components or related requirements (i.e. SSc4.1-4.4), the project team must demonstrate superior performance in all related areas to be awarded an ID credit.
- To be consistent with other LEED credits, the USGBC tries to adhere to the principle that all proposed ID credits have to be achieved through action rather than inaction.
- Other than reaching the established exceedences, there is no guaranteed way to earn an ID credit. Ultimately every ID credit is up to the discretion of the USGBC reviewer.

Examples:

The following is a list of some strategies that Colorado projects have successfully used to earn ID credits:

- Green housekeeping
- Low-emitting furniture systems
- Applying Labs21 Criteria
- Environmentally preferable services
- Sustainability education
- Exemplary encouragement of alternative transportation
- Radon mitigation
- Donation and protection of open space
- Exceeding established exceedence thresholds or demonstrating exceptional performance within the following established LEED categories:
 - SSc4 Alternative Transportation
 - SSc7.1 Reduce Heat Islands, Non-Roof
 - WEc3 Water Use Reduction
 - EA c6 Green Power
 - MR c4 Recycled Content
 - MR c5.1 Locally Manufactured
 - MR c5.2 Regionally Extracted

See the USGBC website, CIRs, or contact individual project teams for additional information.

Resources:**USGBC**

Refer to the rating systems for other products, such as LEED-EB, LEED-CI or others for ideas for innovation credits.

Website: www.usgbc.org/leed

Labs21: Labs for the 21st Century

Began by the U.S. EPA and DOE, Labs21 is a voluntary partnership program dedicated to improving the environmental performance of U.S. laboratories.

Website: www.labs21century.gov



CH2M HILL's procurement of Herman Miller furniture systems earned an Innovation credit for the notable environmental attributes of the furniture, including use of recycled materials and recyclability. In addition, much of the furniture was delivered in reusable blanket wraps to reduce packaging materials.

Courtesy: CH2M HILL



CH2M HILL earned an innovation credit for its T-Rex Tamer website for employees and others in the area. The site promotes carpooling, bicycling, and alternative transportation, and provides information to help reduce or avoid traffic congestion.

Courtesy: CH2M HILL

ID Credit 2: LEED Accredited Professional

Project teams can achieve one credit for having a LEED Accredited individual on the project team.

Recommendation:

- With the growing number of LEED Accredited Professionals, plan on achieving this credit by including at least one LEED AP on your project team.

QUICK FACTS

Implementation: Strongly recommended.

Historical Data: 100% of Colorado LEED certified projects have successfully earned this credit.

Resources:

USGBC

Refer to the USGBC website for the LEED AP Directory.

Website: www.usgbc.org/leed

USGBC Colorado Chapter

The Colorado Chapter of the USGBC provides resources such as guidance on how to choose LEED consultants, as well as a chapter member directory.

Website: www.usgbc.org/Chapters/colorado

Governor's Office of Energy Management & Conservation (OEMC)

Rebuild Colorado Business Partners

In some cases, a project team needs a person or company that has LEED accreditation that also performs other tasks such as energy modeling, daylighting analysis, or energy design assistance. This directory includes contact information for energy efficiency consultants that serve Colorado (who are not necessarily LEED accredited).

Website:

www.colorado.gov/rebuildco/partners/business.htm